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II.

Plan of an Ancient Fortification at Marietta, Ohio.

By WINTHROP SARGENT.

(Communicated to the Academy, May 29th, 1787. Brought to the Notice of the Academy at a Meeting held February 13th, 1850, by HENRY I. BOWDITCH, M. D., Librarian.)

SOME months since, while examining some old manuscripts belonging to the library of the American Academy, I found the accompanying plan of the ancient structures at Marietta, Ohio. It bears a date four years earlier than any documents mentioned by Messrs. Squiers and Davis, in the first volume of the Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge. It appears, by the records of the Academy, to have been received at the meeting held May 29th, 1787; but it has never been published in the Memoirs, and I am not aware that it has appeared in any other form.

These structures at Marietta are incidentally alluded to in a letter addressed by General Parsons to President Willard, of Harvard University, dated October 2d, 1786, and published in the Academy's Memoirs, First Series, Vol. II. p. 122. In this letter there is mention made of another plan that had been transmitted to President Stiles, of Yale College. Of that plan I have no knowledge.

On comparing the plan given in the Smithsonian Contributions with that belonging to the Academy, the two will be found to bear a very close resemblance. In fact, all the main features, and most of the details, completely correspond. There are, however, some discrepancies. Those most evident are the following, viz. :—The wall and lunette, marked *M* and *L* on the Academy's plan, which Mr. Sargent says were somewhat dilapidated when he examined them, have now disappeared. At least they are not found upon the Smithsonian drawing, which was carefully copied from one made by

C. Whittlesey, Esq., Engineer for the Survey of the State of Ohio. One mound of earth seems to have escaped the notice of Mr. Sargent; viz. that situated at the north-eastern part of the largest inclosure, as it appears on the Smithsonian plan. Finally, in several places, Mr. Sargent represents as a series of mounds what Mr. Whittlesey describes as continuous walls.

It is greatly to be deplored, that so little regard is generally paid by the inhabitants of our Western States to these monuments of a bygone and evidently powerful race. Some of these remains are, it is true, choicely guarded by the inhabitants of Marietta. The beautiful mound, *K*, for example, is inclosed in such a manner, that it will probably be preserved. Other portions are kept as public squares. But the walls of the graded way, *E*, Messrs. Squiers and Davis inform us, "are rapidly disappearing" under the encroachments of carriages, which pass and repass through Warren Street, Marietta, which is laid out upon it. I fear that this recklessness in reference to many curious remains of the same character, that are scattered through the West, exists very generally. Even in the city of Cincinnati, I learn that a mound has been wholly extirpated, and the only memento of its former existence is the name given to the street that runs over its former site. During a recent visit to the West, I examined, with some care, the extraordinary remains of a walled village, called "Fort Ancient." The husbandman was ploughing over it, and a long passage-way projecting from its main entrance, and only recently defended on each side by an embankment of considerable height, had, at the time of my visit, been so obliterated, that I could discover only the slightest traces of it. The United States government sends out its corps of observers to study the Dead Sea, and the Antarctic regions, and to learn the habits of the untamed inhabitants of the islands of the Pacific Ocean. It is right so to do. But why should it not also employ an efficient body of men thoroughly to investigate all these interesting structures in the West? Much has been done by individual observers; among whom all honor is due to the authors of the first volume of the Smithsonian Contributions. But much remains yet to be performed. It should be done by government, and done soon, or it will be too late.

H. I. B.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts ; Boston, March the 27th 1787.

SIR

I beg Leave to communicate to your Excellency and the Academy a Plan of some antient Ruins in the Western Territory — they were discovered in the last year by an American Garrison at Fort Harmar, and have their Antiquity incontestibly evinced.

Altho' there are not wanting Proofs that the western Country was once populous, and of science, yet I believe that no Other works have been investigated which indicate so much the Appearance of military Knowledge — and I cannot but observe that *here* the Art of Defence seems to have been well understood.

At Grave Rivulet (which Receives its Name from a large artificial Mount of Earth about Seventy Miles from the Ruins) are very extensive Fortifications, consisting of large elliptical Forts, and circular Redoubts — they bear similar Testimonies of Antiquity with those in the annexed Plan, but are of inferior Style and Aspect. The Mount of Earth is an Object of great Curiosity to Travellers, and was once I imagine nearly in Form of a Cone, but at present the Top is irregularly sunken in, and of sixty feet Diameter. Human Bones are dug from every part of it, and to the very summit is a luxuriant Growth of fine tall Oaks.

I had no Instrument with me for taking the Altitude of this Grave, but I measured the Circumference, which was equal to seven hundred and eighty three Feet, and over the Summit from opposite Parts of the Base two hundred and ninety — which, by a Geometrical Construction of the Figure, gives nearly seventy Feet for its Height.

With great Respect

I have the Honor to be

your Excellency's

most obedient

most devoted Servant

W. SARGENT.

His Excellency GOVERNOR BOWDOIN,

President of the Academy of Arts and Sciences.

References and Explanations.

- A.* Square mound or Turret of Earth with four easy ascents to the Top.
- B.* An oblong Do. with three ascents and an upright Cut on the So. East side.
- C.* Another oblong square with two ascents.
- D.* A Lunette, with a small Turret of Earth rising from the centre.
- E.* A covert way, or communication with the low grounds at *ee*, where probably was once the bed of the River: The walls of this way are thirty feet thick, and as high in many places.
- F.* Appears a natural Ravine converted to an aqueduct.
- g.* One of the principal entrances of the place; about 132 feet wide. — The other apertions in the lines are only half that width, except at the angles.
The N. W. and N. E. Walls are generally about four feet high.
The S. E. and S. W. something lower, and all of them 30 feet thick, with an easy exterior and interior slope.
- I.* The largest of all the mounds along the lines of *G.* it is 15 feet high and 35 diameter, the others only of 7 or 8 feet high, and of smaller diameters.
- K.* A mound of Earth 30 feet high and 50 feet diameter, surrounded by a redoubt and internal ditch of $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet deep.
- L.* An advanced Lunette, with an imperfect ditch.
- M.* A Wall or parapet almost effaced at this time.
- N.* Excavations in the Earth from which it is supposed the walls and mounds were principally composed; that at 8 is 20 feet deep and 150 feet diameter.
- * Mounds or Turretts of Earth. — *d.* ditches.
- ❖❖❖ Walls or parapets of Earth.
- N. B. There is at this time on the mounds and Walls of Earth timber of 4 and 5 feet diameter, and evidently not the first growth.

PLAN
of the Ruins of an ancient Town or fortified
CAMP near the *CONFLUENCE* of the **OHIO**
 and *Mississippi Rivers* *presented*
to the American Academy of
ARTS and SCIENCES
by their most obedient
Winthrop Sargent.

